

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable consideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 21-37 are pending in the application, with Claims 21, 32, and 35 amended by the present amendment.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 21-27 and 29-37 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Conklin et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,388,050, hereinafter Conklin); and Claim 28 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Conklin in view of Freedman (U.S. Patent No. 4,839,829).

Independent Claims 21, 32, 35 are amended to recite that the maturity stages correspond to intermediate goals set for achieving the sales transaction. Independent Claims 21, 32, 35 are also amended to recite “wherein in a case where an input is received which represents that a certain maturity stage is achieved in the sales transaction with the specific customer, information corresponding to this input is stored in said database in said storing step.” Support for these amendments is found in Applicants’ originally filed specification.¹ No new matter is added.

Briefly recapitulating, amended Claim 21 is directed to a method for managing sales activities. The method includes a) storing in database information relative to each of a plurality of predetermined maturity stages of a sales transaction with a specific customer; b) retrieving a portion of said information, said portion corresponding to at least one of said plurality of predetermined maturity stages; and c) displaying said portion. The maturity stages correspond to intermediate goals set for achieving the sales transaction. In a case where an input is received which represents that a certain maturity stage is achieved in the sales transaction with the specific customer, information corresponding to this input is stored

¹ Specification, page 14, line 1 – page 15, line 8.

in the database in the storing step. The present invention allows for improved sales efficiency without depending on the skills of the sales person. The present invention also allows a sales manager to objectively evaluate sales staff performance.²

Conklin discloses a multivariate negotiations engine for international transaction processing, including seller processes, sponsor processes, and buyer processes.³ Seller processes include alerts that a pending offer or counter-offer has been submitted. In addition, a seller may establish a website to store sales and advertising information. Also, a seller may be notified of offers/counter-offers by email or a browser.⁴ However, Conklin does not disclose or suggest Applicants' claimed step of "storing in database information relative to each of a plurality of predetermined maturity stages of a sales transaction with a specific customer." Conklin also fails to disclose Applicants' claimed maturity stages which correspond to intermediate goals set for achieving the sales transaction. Applicants further submit that Conklin fails to disclose Applicants claimed "retrieving a portion of said information, said portion corresponding to at least one of said plurality of predetermined maturity stages." Conklin also fails to disclose or suggest Applicants' claimed "in a case where an input is received which represents that a certain maturity stage is achieved in the sales transaction with the specific customer, information corresponding to this input is stored in said database in said storing step."

As Conklin fails to disclose or suggest all the elements of independent Claim 21, Applicants submit the inventions defined by Claim 21, and all claims depending therefrom, are not rendered obvious by the asserted prior art for at least the reasons stated above.⁵ For

² Specification, page 2, lines 7-18.

³ Conklin, column 19, lines 14-26; Figure 1g.

⁴ Conklin, column 19, lines 28-37; Figure 1g.

⁵ MPEP § 2142 "...the prior art reference (or references when combined) must teach or suggest all the claim limitations. The teaching or suggestion to make the claimed combination and the reasonable expectation of success must both be found in the prior art, and not based on applicant's disclosure. In re Vaeck, 947 F.2d 488, 20 USPQ2d 1438 (Fed. Cir. 1991)."

Application No. 09/964,585
Reply to Office Action of September 8, 2004

similar reasons, Applicants submit that the inventions defined by independent Claims 32 and 35, and all claims depending therefrom, patentably define over the cited reference.

Accordingly, in view of the present amendment and in light of the previous discussion, Applicants respectfully submit that the present application is in condition for allowance and respectfully request an early and favorable action to that effect.

Respectfully submitted,

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